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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

INTRODUCTION TO STAMP COLLECTING

taken from

Stamps & Stories, 8th Edition

The Encyclopedia of U.S. Stamps

Produced Especially for All Beginning Stamp Collectors

Included are:

- How to Begin a Collection
- Equipment Needed
- Glossary of Terms
- Condition and Color Guide
- Types of Stamps
- Philatelic Product Line

P 1.2:

INTRODUCTION TO STAMP COLLECTING

Philately, according to the dictionary, is the collecting or study of stamps. A philatelist is someone who does one or both of these. It's estimated that 20,000,000 people in the United States fit that category, pursuing what is said to be the world's most popular hobby. You begin your collection by saving the stamps from mail delivered to your home or you can go to your local post office and buy each new issue of stamp as it is released. You can trade with people who collect, join a stamp club, or buy from stamp dealers.

Whatever your collecting area, you will find that these colorful bits of paper capture the spirit and history of their place of origin. To look at them is to take a journey into the history of man and his accomplishments.

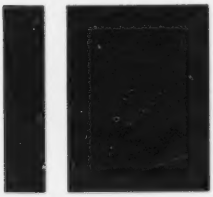
Philately is educational, inspiring, enjoyable and entertaining. Stamps and stamp collecting will provide you with a fun-filled way to use your leisure time.

How to Begin. There are many ways to collect. You can collect a specimen of each stamp issued by a country. You can expand on that and collect the various varieties of such stamps. Varieties are subtle differences in color and design or perhaps perforations. You can collect stamps "on cover"—that is the entire envelope containing the stamp, the postmark and the cancellation, showing how and where it went on its assignment to deliver the mail.

Topical collecting is very popular today. To form such a collection you should choose a subject or topic that interests you . . . sports, music, animals, ships, for example. If you have chosen one that is broad enough, you will find it quite easy to create a fascinating and personally meaningful collection. Many groups of specialized topical stamp collectors have prepared lists of stamp issues dealing with their subject, and these lists can easily be obtained to help you in starting.

Equipment. As with most hobbies, to enjoy them fully you must have the proper equipment. Stamp collecting is no exception. To get started, you should acquire an album to keep your stamps in, stamp hinges or stamp mounts to hold them in the album, and a pair of tongs so that they can be handled without damage. A magnifying glass helps to see important details.

Albums. Albums on the market are geared for every pocketbook, every taste, every specialty. Choose yours wisely and well. Make sure your album is well-illustrated on pages of good quality paper. Make sure the album is designed to do what you wish it to do. Albums with looseleaf pages are good because they allow for convenient expansion of your collection.



U. S. GOV'T. PUBS.
DEPOSITORY 376

Types of Stamps. You may limit your collection to a simple type of stamp or to stamps of any kind. Stamp issues are normally divided into the following types:

Regular or Definitive Stamps. These are the stamps you'll find on most day-in, day-out mail. They are printed in huge quantities and are kept in use by the post office for sizable stretches of time — several years usually. Definitives usually appear in a series with values from 1 cent to higher values, say $5.00, with as many intermediate values as are needed for the postal rates then in effect.

Regular or Definitive

Commemorative Stamps. These are issued to honor an important event, person or special subject. They are usually larger than the definitives, more colorful and are circulated for a limited time. Often they depict famous people, but U.S. stamps never depict a living person.

Coil Stamps. These are stamps issued in rolls, so that each stamp has two straight edges and two perforated edges. Many collectors specialize in this type of stamp.

Commemorative

Coil

Air Mail Stamps. Air Mail stamps are no longer issued for postage within the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Some U.S. Air Mail stamps for use in sending mail overseas are still issued.

Postage Due Stamps. Postage due stamps are affixed to mail at the post office to indicate that the prepaid postage was not enough to carry the letter to its destination and more is to be paid for delivery.

Air Mail

Postage Due

Special Delivery Stamps. These stamps are sold to the sender at a premium price to secure extra-fast delivery for a letter or package.

Special Delivery

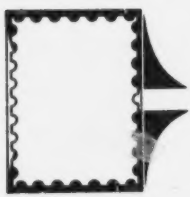
READEX
FICHE

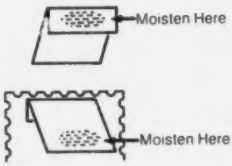
Mounts and Hinges. Mounts are special plastic envelopes that hold the stamp. Most mounts are pre-glued and can be placed into your album over the stamp illustration. Mounts should be used for never cancelled stamps to preserve their value. For less expensive stamps you can use very low cost stamp hinges. If you use hinges, fold back about one fourth of the hinge with the sticky side out. Moisten the folded-back part lightly and place it on the back of the stamp, centered at the top. Then, holding the hinged stamp with your tongs, moisten the bottom part and fasten the stamp in position on the album page.

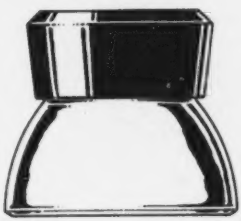
Other Tools. As you progress, there are other tools you will want. The perforations found around the edges of a stamp can often be the sole means of determining the difference between two similar stamps. A gauge to measure the size and number of these perforations is, therefore, a very useful device. The gauge usually contains, as well, a millimeter measurement so that the dimensions of a stamp can be accurately determined.

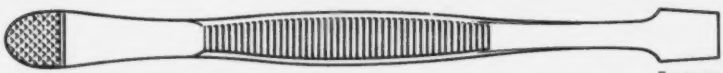
A watermark detector is useful when the only way to distinguish between two stamps is by their watermarks. Watermarks can often be seen if the stamp is held up to a bright light. To see a watermark clearly and easily you must use a watermark detector. In its simplest form, this is a small black tray. The stamp is placed face down in the tray, a few drops of lighter fluid are poured over it and the watermark becomes visible. Be sure to air-dry the stamp before putting it back into your album and be careful of fire.

Catalogues. Even if you are a beginner, a catalogue is one of the most important adjuncts in forming a collection. The catalogue not only identifies a stamp and its major varieties by color and denomination, but also supplies such information as its date of issue, the method used to print it, and its perforation size and watermark, if any. It identifies the subject depicted on the stamp and often gives the reason for which it was issued. Added to all this, it provides the value of the stamp, both used and unused. The catalogue also contains descriptive identifying numbers for each stamp. These numbers are used by dealers and collectors as a shorthand way of identifying the stamp they wish to buy or sell. For U.S. stamps, Stamps & Stories is a wonderful catalogue that contains all the information needed to learn about and collect these items of American history.


Mount




Magnifying Glass


Tweezers

DEFINITION OF CATALOGUE PRICES

Stamp collectors use catalogue prices as a guide to help them in buying items for their collections or for the purpose of trading stamps with other collectors. The values for the stamps quoted in Stamps & Stories are taken from the latest issue of the catalogue used by most United States collectors. These price guides will help you to plan your stamp purchases or to evaluate the stamps that you may come across. However, there are a few things about catalogue prices that you must know so you will understand and use them correctly.

Catalogue values are simply guidelines to stamp values. Actual stamps may cost more or less than the values shown in the catalogue. As you may know, one reason for this is that stamp condition **(see pp. 10-11)** is very important in determining the value of any stamp. The catalogue gives a price for both unused (mint) stamps and for those that have been used or cancelled. In each case, the catalogue value is for a single stamp (except where prices of blocks or sheets of stamps are specifically noted).

Both the used and unused catalogue prices are for a stamp in **Fine Condition** and the catalogue price also assumes that the copy has been hinged. If you want a stamp with **Superb** centering and color that has never been hinged, it could cost several times the catalogue value. But, stamps in less than **Fine** condition or those that have been heavily hinged may be worth only a small percentage of catalogue value.

In the case of used stamps, the catalogue price is based on a light cancellation. Heavy cancellations lessen a stamp's value. Sometimes used stamps, however, are worth more than unused stamps. This frequently happens when the cancellation is of a special type or for a significant date. Of course, this could mean that the stamp is worth more **only** if it is still on the original envelope.

So, if you find old envelopes, be sure to have them evaluated before simply tearing off the stamp and discarding its "cover."

There are other important things that you should know about catalogue prices. One is that they are estimates of how much you should expect to pay for a copy of the stamp from a regular dealer. If you should wish to sell the same stamp to a dealer, he may offer you much less than the catalogue price. The dealer's quote will be based upon his own interest in owning your stamp: he may have a full supply of this stamp at the moment and he will only buy more at a very low price.

Another point about catalogue prices concerns very low priced stamps. Frequently the catalogue will show that a stamp is worth a small or "minimum" value, like $.03. This means that a stamp dealer cannot afford to sell you an individual stamp for less than this minimum amount. However, a packet of stamps made up of numerous inexpensive stamps is not necessarily worth the total of their individual catalogue values.

As a general rule you should try to collect only the best quality stamps. This practice will result in a hobby that can be enjoyable and rewarding for the rest of your life.

STAMP COLLECTOR'S TERMS

Terms to describe condition and color are only a part of the language of stamp collectors. Following is a glossary of basic philatelic terms that every stamp collector should know.

Approvals: Stamps sent to a collector for examination. Approvals must be bought or returned to the dealer within a specific time.

Bisect: Half of a stamp used to pay postage of half the face value of the original stamp. This variety must appear on its original cover with the cancellation or postmark covering the cut.

Block: An unsevered group of stamps at least two stamps wide and two stamps high.

Booklet Pane: A small pane of stamps especially printed and cut to be sold in booklets.

Cachet: A special handstamp or printed device on a cover to denote the special circumstances in which it was mailed.

Cancellation: A mark placed on a stamp by a postal authority to prevent its reuse.

Cancelled to Order (CTO): Stamps which are cancelled by the postal authorities without being sent through the mails. They are normally less desirable than stamps which have served their postal function.

Coils: Stamps issued in rolls for use in dispensers, affixing or vending machines.

Color Changeling: A stamp whose color has been changed, either accidentally or intentionally.

Commemoratives: Stamps which honor anniversaries, important people, or special events. Commemoratives are usually sold for a specific length of time.

Compound Perforations: A stamp with perforations of different sizes on different sides.

Condition: The state of a stamp in regard to centering, color, freshness, cancellation, and other related characteristics.

Cover: The entire wrapping or envelope in which a letter has been sent through the mail.

Cut Square: An envelope stamp cut out with a square margin.

Definitives: Regular issues of stamps as distinct from commemoratives.

Die: An engraving from which the plates for printing stamps can be made.

Errors: Stamps with accidental mistakes in color, paper, inscription, watermark, etc. Errors also include bicolored stamps with inverted centers.

Essays: Designs submitted in stamp form but not accepted for issuance.

First Day Cover: A cover bearing a new stamp and cancelled with the first day of use, usually at an officially designated location.

Flat Press Stamps: Stamps printed on a flat bed press, as distinguished from a rotary press.

Freaks: Stamps which show conspicuous deviations from the normal caused by shifted perforations, heavy inking, color shifts, or similar accidents during production. Not errors.

Grill: Parallel rows of small pyramids impressed or embossed on the stamp in order to break the fibers of the paper so that the cancellation ink will soak in and make washing for reuse impossible.

Gum: The adhesive on the back of a stamp.

Hinges: Small strips of paper gummed on one side and used by collectors to mount their stamps.

Imperforate: Stamps without perforations. They must be separated with scissors and are usually collected in pairs to prove their authenticity.

India Paper: A soft, thin, silky appearing wove paper usually used for proof impressions.

Inverted Center: A stamp with the center printed upside down in relation to the rest of the design.

Laid Paper: A paper showing alternate light and dark parallel lines when held to the light or immersed in benzine.

Locals: Stamps issued for use in restricted areas either by government or private carriers.

Margin: The border outside the printed design of a stamp, or the similar border of a pane of stamps.

Overprint: Any word, inscription, or device placed on a stamp to alter its use or locality, or to serve a special purpose.

Pair: Two unsevered stamps.

Pane: A portion of the original sheet as cut for sale at the post office.

Part-Perforate: A stamp which has perforations on one, two or three sides.

Pen Cancel: A cancellation supplied to the stamp with pen and ink.

Perforations: Line of small cuts or holes placed between two rows of stamps to facilitate separation.

Plate: The actual object from which the stamps are printed.

Plate Number Block: A block of stamps with sheet margin showing a plate number or numbers. Often it is known simply as a plate block.

Postal Stationery: Envelopes, postal cards, wrappers, etc. which had nonadhesive stamps embossed or printed on them.

Postmark: A mark struck upon envelopes, generally to indicate the name of the post office, date of mailing, etc.

Overprint

Imperforate Stamp

Perforated

Precancel

Coils. These stamps are perforated on two sides only.

Surcharge

Cut Square

Se-tenant

Precancels: Stamps with cancellations applied before the mailing of the article on which they prepay postage.

Proofs: Trial printing of a stamp made from the original die or the plate.

Provisionals: Stamps issued prior to the regular issues or to meet a temporary shortage of regular stamps.

Reissue: An official printing of a stamp, or stamps, that had been discontinued.

Remainders: Stocks of stamps on hand after the issue has been discontinued.

Reprints: Impressions from the original plates, blocks, or stones taken after the issuance of the stamps to post offices has ceased and their postal use has been voided.

Revenue Stamps: Stamps issued for use in collecting special taxes on documents, proprietary articles, products, etc.

Rotary Press Stamps: Stamps printed on a rotary type press from curved plates as compared to stamps printed from flat plates on a flat bed press. They will be slightly larger in one direction than flat press stamps.

Rouletting: Short consecutive cuts in the paper between rows of stamps to facilitate separation.

Se-tenant: An unsevered pair, strip or block of stamps which differ in value, design or surcharge.

Sheet: Complete unseparated group of stamps as originally printed.

Special Printing: Stamps of current design reissued, usually on a better grade of paper and in brilliant colors.

Stampless Cover: An envelope without stamps generally bearing a postmark and sometimes notations such as "Paid," "Paid 10," etc.

Straight Edge: The imperforate side of a stamp which is otherwise perforate.

Surcharge: An overprint which alters or restates the face value or denomination of the stamp to which it is applied.

Tied On: A stamp is "tied on" when the cancellation or postmark extends from the stamp to the envelope.

Topicals: Area of philately in which emphasis is on the subject portrayed on stamps rather than the stamps themselves.

Unused: A stamp with or without original gum which has no cancellation or other evidence of postal duty.

Used: A stamp which has done postal duty as evidenced by the cancellation.

Want List: A list of stamp numbers or philatelic items needed for a collection.

Watermark: A design or pattern incorporated into the paper during its manufacture.

Wove Paper: A paper of uniform texture throughout, showing no light or dark patterns when held to the light or immersed in benzine.

STAMP COLOR GUIDE

A slight difference in the color of a stamp can make it not only a different variety, but sometimes a thing of great rarity. The ability to recognize such color differences requires a practiced eye, but being able to ascertain a valuable shade is one of the real enjoyments of stamp collecting.

The stamp colors we produce here are not 100% accurate because printing processes such as the one used in Stamps & Stories use different kinds of ink and paper than the original stamps. As a result, the colors shown in the book are not exact reproductions.

In most catalogues the illustrations are only in black and white. The catalogue editors use many descriptive phrases to indicate the color of the stamps listed. Below we list some of the more popular names for the colors found on stamps along with some stamps that go with them.

Bright Blue

Blue

Dark Blue

Ultramarine

Purple

Violet

Carmine

Rose Lake

Peach Blossom

Red

Henna Brown

Brown

Bistre Brown

Sepia

Gray Brown

Dark Gray

Black

Light Green

Green

Olive

Light Olive Green

Blue Green

Yellow Gold

Orange

Deep Orange

Yellow-Black-Green

STAMP CONDITION

Condition, in the philatelic sense, means the state of a stamp— that is, whether it is a superb specimen, a mediocre specimen or a specimen that is below average. A stamp in fine condition is always more valuable than one that has been less well cared for.

When selecting a stamp to be placed in your collection, always make sure that it is the best you can obtain. Unused stamps should, if possible, be well-centered, fresh looking and have the original gum intact. Gum is the proper term for the adhesive applied to the back of the stamp. Remember, too, that unused stamps that have been hinged or with only part of the original gum are priced below a never hinged stamp with its original gum intact. Used stamps should be well-centered, lightly cancelled and never faded, dirty or stained. There should be no thinning of the paper. Thinning often occurs when stamps are improperly removed from envelopes or album pages and part of the stamp is removed as well.

Most dealers designate stamp condition by such term as "Superb," "Fine," and "Good." There are many gradations in the range from "Exceptionally Fine," "Very Fine," and "Very Good," through "Fair," "Poor," and "Spacefiller." However, for our purposes, "Superb," "Fine," and "Good" cover the ground for most newer collectors.

"Superb" means a stamp that is of the finest quality, has perfect centering, brilliant color and perfect gum. Used copies in this category also have perfect centering. They are fresh looking, are lightly cancelled, and are sound of body.

"Fine" means a stamp without flaws, average centering, gum with light hinge marks. Used copies in this category are not quite as fresh, cancels are heavier, and centering is average.

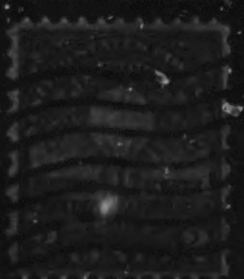
"Good" means stamps that are off-center, but fairly attractive and there may be minor defects such as disturbed gum, tiny thins, heavy hinge marks. Used copies, except for the gum, fall into this classification.

Stamps that fall below these standards should be ignored and are not worth acquiring. Of course, there are exceptions to these rules, but they do not come into the province of a new collector and will not be discussed here.

Superb

Fine

Good



Cancelled, Fine

Cancelled, Good

Lightly Cancelled

PRICE TRENDS OF SELECTED STAMP ISSUES

As the price of goods and services continues to spiral, there is comfort in knowing that the value of your stamp collection is more than keeping pace. In many cases, stamp values outdistance most other investments, providing an invaluable safeguard against rising costs.

The graph gives you a good idea of how selected issues have increased over the past year. The stamp issues listed represent a broad range of stamps purchased by U.S. collectors. Also, the prices of classic U.S. issues have tended to hold up better than similar issues of other countries. Keep in mind, too, that many issues have out-performed those shown here, while still others have shown negligible increases. Overall, though, the trend in stamp values has been upward.

If you began your collection a few years ago, and have made wise choices since then, it is very possible that your stamps today may be worth several times the amount of your initial investment. And, of course, it's impossible to even put a price tag on the hours of enjoyment that stamp collecting provides.

Through the decade of the 1970s, stamp values more than held their own compared to a significant increase in our cost of living. If that performance continues during the 1980s, stamps will most certainly continue to be a fine investment value. In fact, the chart data shown here include only stamp types listed in Stamps & Stories. If other, higher value issues were included, stamp values would likely reflect an even greater increase.

It's important to remember two things. First, the primary purpose of stamp collecting is the enjoyment of the hobby, with value increases being an occasional benefit. Some stamps, in fact, do not increase in monetary value, yet are still fun to acquire and display. Secondly, the amount of gain indicated by stamp price comparisons in catalogues is overstated; catalogue prices are what you must pay to purchase a copy of the stamp. When you wish to sell your copy to another collector or a stamp dealer, you should expect to sacrifice anywhere between 10% and 50% of the current catalogue value.

The prices for these stamps have been taken from The Harris Postage Stamp Price Index, 1980-81 Edition (©1980 by H.E. Harris & Co., Inc.) and are reprinted by permission of the publisher. Prices refer to the market price for the issue in average condition in that year. Prices refer to uncancelled stamps.

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C1 C4 C11 E1

U. S. STAMP PRODUCTION

Each year, from the thousands of requests it receives, the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee makes recommendations for new stamp and postal stationery issues. The Postmaster General makes the final determinations based on the Committee's recommendations.

The U.S. Postal Service commissions an artist to design the stamp or stationery item. From the artist's design, the Treasury Department's Bureau of Engraving and Printing prepares an actual-size production model. The engraving process or the color separation process begins after the model is approved and ends with either a printing plate or a printing cylinder. Printing plates and cylinders are produced in various ways—depending upon the printing process being used.

Production Techniques and Equipment Used

The Bureau of Engraving and Printing is the main source of supply of U.S. postage stamps. The following kinds of presses print U.S. Postal Service stamps:

Single Color Intaglio Press. These presses are used to print single-color stamps on a continuous web of pregummed paper. Phosphor is applied to the stamps during the printing operation, and stamps may be precancelled at the same time. These presses produce most of our regular postage stamp issues.

Three-color Intaglio Press (sheet fed). This intaglio press prints stamps in up to three colors on sheets of gummed postage stamp paper that passes through the press once only. Phosphor tagging is applied later by a different process. Many colorful commemorative issues are produced on this press, sometimes in combination with offset printing.

Three-color Intaglio Press (web fed). This intaglio press prints stamps in up to three colors on a continuous web of pregummed postage stamp paper that passes through the press once only. Phosphor tagging is applied by a separate unit attached to the press. Many regular booklet and coil postage stamps are produced on this press.

Six-color Gravure Press. This press can print up to six colors and apply phosphor tagging or a seventh color on continuous webs of either gummed or ungummed rolls. It is capable of producing stamps at speeds up to 900 feet-per-minute, and delivering the finished printings in either sheets or rolls.

Eight-color Gravure/Intaglio Press. This press is capable of printing eight colors—five by gravure and three by intaglio—with one pass through the press. When fully employed, the press can print regular, commemorative, or book stamps on a web of pregummed coated paper, phosphor tag them, precancel them, and print on the back if desired. It also perforates, cuts and delivers the stamps in stacks of 100 sheets. This press can be used to produce stamps by gravure alone, intaglio alone or by the two processes in combination.

Offset Presses. The Bureau applies its six offset presses to a variety of tasks, two of them relating to postage stamp production and the rest to other Government printing requirements. Since the United States does not produce postage stamps via the offset method alone, these presses are used to apply colors to stamps that pass also through intaglio presses. The offset presses are used also to apply phosphor to some postage stamps.

Printing of the Space Achievement Issue

The U.S. Space Achievement stamps, issued in May, 1981, were printed in six colors on the gravure press. As the paper went through the press, the **Yellow** ink was applied first, followed by the **Gray** ink. The next color to be applied was **Red.** The fourth plate contained the **Blue. Dark Blue,** the fifth plate, started to bring out greater detail, while the **Black** plate completed the image. Please see the illustrations on page 15 which demonstrate this process.

The six-color gravure process

Yellow

Yellow & Gray

Yellow, Gray & Red

Yellow, Gray, Red & Blue

Yellow, Gray, Red, Blue & Dark Blue

Yellow, Gray, Red, Blue, Dark Blue & Black

STAMP CLUBS

What Are Benjamin Franklin Stamp Clubs?

The United States Postal Service began a stamp club program in elementary schools in 1974-75. Its purpose was to introduce fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students to the educational and enjoyable hobby of stamp collecting. Various stamp club materials, a monthly newsletter, and special student-involvement projects are distributed to these stamp clubs free-of-charge by the Postal Service. To date, more than 65,000 clubs have been established, offering over 1,500,000 young students an opportunity to learn a fun-filled and educational hobby.

Why Are These Clubs Named After Ben Franklin?

You know all about Ben Franklin's key and kite experiment, his Franklin stove, his bifocals and his Poor Richard's Almanac. But did you know that Franklin was also the Father of the Postal Service? That's why it's his face that appears on the first postage stamp the U.S. ever issued. And that's why, when the Postal Service decided to help establish stamp clubs in schools all over the country, it thought of calling them Benjamin Franklin Stamp Clubs.

How Does A Typical Stamp Club Get Started?

Because the clubs are primarily intended for third to seventh grade students, the most logical place to get a club started is in the schools. Most schools will encourage a volunteer from their staff, who is interested in stamp collecting, to serve as a club leader.

If you think you'd like to start a stamp club, your first task is to find members. So publicize your club with announcements on your school's bulletin boards and in the school newsletters . . . with posters in the windows of cooperating stores, banks and restaurants . . . with announcements in local newspapers and over local radio stations, if they're willing to carry club activity news without charge.

The first American cartoon was published by Benjamin Franklin in his Pennsylvania Gazette May 9, 1754. The broken parts of the snake are the divided American colonies.

Your announcements should tell when the club will meet, where, and how a prospective member can get additional information.

You'll want a conveniently located place for your meetings, available at no charge to the club. Usually, this means your school classroom, auditorium or other area in your own elementary school. Sometimes, local libraries, churches, museums, community recreation centers, the "Y" or the homes of club members are more convenient locations because of school and bus schedules.

A *club advisor,* usually an interested school teacher or administrative official, will volunteer to help the new club form and conduct its club meetings. A local Postal Service employee in your area will meet with the advisor and typically make a presentation to interested students. That Postal employee will provide the new club with a full supply of organizing materials, including membership cards and certificates, club by-laws and other educational materials. The Postal Service has prepared a lot of other exciting material to help your club get started and to support its activities. These include color movies, film strips, printed brochures, plus stamp albums. Each member also gets a colorful wallet I.D. card, and membership certificate suitable for framing.

The next step is to elect officers. Initially, the club elects only those officers necessary for the club to function properly. Additional officers can be elected as needed, from the club's expanding membership. The rules to govern the club's activities should be developed by the entire membership as early as possible.

Another of your early club meetings could consist of a field trip to the local post office. Be sure to telephone the Postmaster in advance to see if he can arrange for a guided tour. While at the post office, have the local Postmaster endorse the club charter to make your club official, if this has not already been done.

How Does A Stamp Club Operate?

The entire membership should participate in planning club activities. And planning should start at the very first meeting. Clubs typically keep the business part of each meeting short, and the pleasure part long.

The pleasure part consists of trading, buying, and selling stamps. Other than that, members can exhibit their collections. Guest speakers can be invited to lecture or conduct question and answer sessions. Films can be shown. Stamp auctions can be organized. Group discussions can be set up. Club members also enjoy stamp quiz shows—like the quiz shows on television, but with questions that deal exclusively with stamps and collecting.

But with all that going on, how will members ever remember what's coming up and when? They'll read about it in the club newsletter. Many clubs issue a weekly or monthly bulletin to keep members informed. It doesn't have to be an elaborate publication, and the duplication method used can be the least expensive. A single sheet of paper would do very nicely, with pertinent club information on one side and a calendar of meetings and upcoming events on the other.

Does the idea of starting a stamp club sound somewhat difficult? Well, it isn't-not if you organize well, distribute the work fairly, and take things step by step.

So become a member of a stamp club—whether you join a Benjamin Franklin Stamp Club at school or an ongoing stamp club in your community. The joy of collecting is multiplied many times over when you share it.

SPECIALTY COLLECTING

Specialty collecting hasn't anything to do with the subject matter of the stamps you collect. It refers strictly to the form in which you collect them.

Blocks of Four A block of four, with two mint stamps above and two below, can come from anywhere on a sheet of stamps. That makes it the most plentiful form of block and the easiest to come by.

Booklet Panes Stamp booklets were first issued in 1898. On the average, two new booklet panes are issued per year. Most philatelists collect entire panes of entire booklets, just as they came from the post office. The first combination pane, consisting of one 9¢ Freedom to Assemble stamp and seven 13¢ Flag stamps was issued March 11, 1977.

Covers Covers (or envelopes) canceled on a postage stamp's first day of issue are collected with tremendous enthusiasm by a large philatelic audience. On page 19 you'll find a more detailed discussion of first day covers.

Plate Blocks The Postal Service adopted a new plate number system effective January 1, 1981. Except in cases where more than four designs appear in a pane of stamps, the new system establishes a plate block as consisting of four stamps regardless of the number of inks or the press used to print the stamps. The new system permits offset plate numbers to remain on the selvage of panes instead of being trimmed off during production and makes possible the printing of plate numbers on booklet panes and the printing at intervals of plate numbers on coil stamps.

Each color plate or cylinder used initially in the production of a stamp will be designated by the number "1", and the numbers for each plate or cylinder will be grouped in the selvage adjacent to a single stamp. Whenever a plate or a cylinder is replaced during the manufacturing process the number "1" will give way to the number "2" in the color of the plate or cylinder replaced.

"Copyright" Blocks The U.S. Postal Service now copyrights all new stamp designs. The copyright "C" in a circle, followed by "United States Postal Service" or "USPS" and the year, appears in the selvage of each pane. The first copyright inscription appeared January 6, 1978, in the margin of sheets of the Carl Sandburg stamp. Most philatelists collect copyrights in blocks of four.

"Mr. ZIP" Blocks The Zoning Improvement Plan—better known as ZIP Code—was devised to increase postal efficiency. And it succeeded dramatically. A "Mr. ZIP" cartoon and slogan were inaugurated January 10, 1964, with the Sam Houston issue. The cartoon and slogan with adjoining block of four immediately became a popular collectible.

Souvenir Cards In 1938 and 1939, the Postal Office Department Philatelic Truck toured the country distributing souvenir sheets that pictured the White House. They were the forerunners of the modern souvenir card. For more detailed information on souvenir cards, see page 27.

FIRST DAY COVERS

A first-day cover is an envelope that bears a new stamp cancelled on the first-day of the issue at the post office designated to conduct the first-day ceremonies.

For each new stamp or postal stationery issue, the Postal Service designates one post office where the item is first placed on sale. Usually it's a post office that is in some way related to the subject the stamp commemorates. Other post offices place the stamp on sale the following day.

Here's how you can secure a first-day cover through the Postal Service:

The date and place of issue of new stamps are announced by the Postal Service in the press and on post office bulletin board posters.

When the stamps go on sale at your post office, you can buy them and affix them to your own envelopes. Your stamped and addressed envelopes (peelable labels are permitted) should be mailed inside another envelope to "Customer Affixed Envelopes," care of the Postmaster of the designated first day city. The post office will cancel the envelope and return it to you through the mail. All first-day cover requests must be postmarked no later than 15 days from the date of issuance to qualify for cancellation service.

Or, you can send your pre-addressed envelope to the Name of stamp or postal stationery issue, care of the Postmaster of the designated first day city, and the first-day post office will affix the new stamp. You must include payment to cover the total face value of the stamps that will be affixed. Do not send cash. Payment can be made by check, bank draft, or U.S. Postal money order, payable to the U.S. Postal Service.

The envelope you send for your first-day cover can be plain or cacheted. A cacheted envelope carries a special design at the left. The Postal Service doesn't provide cacheted envelopes, but you can buy them from stamp dealers as well as some department and stationery stores. If you ever receive a damaged first-day cover, though, you can send it right back and it will be replaced.

First-day cover service is one way the Postal Service accommodates collectors, and they spare no effort to get the cover in the mail without delay. But be patient . . . the volume of requests is high and occasionally a post office is completely swamped. The 10¢ Moon Landing Airmail Stamp of 1969, for example, was affixed to 8,700,000 first-day covers.

POSTAL STATIONERY

There are three items in the category of collectibles called postal stationery: (1) embossed stamped envelopes, (2) postal cards and (3) aerogrammes. They're all available at post offices, and the number of Americans who collect them is growing all the time.

Aerogrammes

An aerogramme is a flat sheet of paper that's specially shaped, fold-marked and gummed so that, after the message is written, it can be sealed for privacy in transit. It's letter and envelope in one, it's intended for air mail only, and it carries a message anywhere in the world at a lower postage rate than air mail.

Aerogrammes are produced by the Bureau of Engraving and Printing on a Seven-Color press. It can execute multicolor stamp designs, apply a phosphor tag and gum the sealing flaps.

Just as is the case with stamped envelopes and postal cards, the Postal Service has stepped up its issuance of commemorative aerogrammes in recent years.

Postal Cards

Plain and simple one-color Government postal cards were first issued May 1, 1873. They stayed plain and simple until 1956, when the first U.S. commemorative postal card came out.

"Visit the USA" was the theme of the first pictorial postal card, issued in 1966. Six years later, a series of five picture postal cards hailed "Tourism Year of the Americas." The backs of the cards featured twenty different U.S. scenic attractions.

Postal cards are manufactured at the Government Printing Office in Washington D.C. Regular one-color cards can come off the four high-speed rotary web presses at a rate of 250,000 an hour.The Government Printing Office's two-color sheet-fed offset presses produce the two-color air mail and multi-color commemorative cards. Some 800 million postal cards are issued each year by the Postal Service, accounting for approximately 2,500 tons of paper annually.

Stamped Envelopes

In the case of stamped envelopes, the stamp is embossed and printed right onto the envelope rather than separately affixed. In recent years the number of commemorative stamped envelopes issued by the United States has been on the increase. Multicolor was recently introduced to embossed stamp envelopes.

Stamped envelopes are manufactured for the Postal Service under private contract. They're issued in a number of sizes and styles, including the window type.

Stamped envelopes were first issued in June, 1853. In 1865 envelopes bearing the purchaser's printed return address were authorized by law. The average annual issues of stamped envelopes today is in excess of 1 billion.

The record for the largest number of stamped envelopes manufactured in a single day goes all the way back to 1932. A new postal rate was going into effect, and an enormous quantity of envelopes was needed to stock the post offices of the nation. To meet the monumental need, the contractor produced, in a single day, a total of 19,168,000 stamped envelopes.

See the U.S.A... vacationland of the world!
USA
30c
USPS 580
Tour
The
United
States
AEROGRAMME • VIA AIR MAIL • PAR AVION
Second fold
Aerogramme
Postal Card
USA 10c
Battle of Cowpens, 1781
15c
USA
AMERICA'S CUP
Stamped Envelope
21

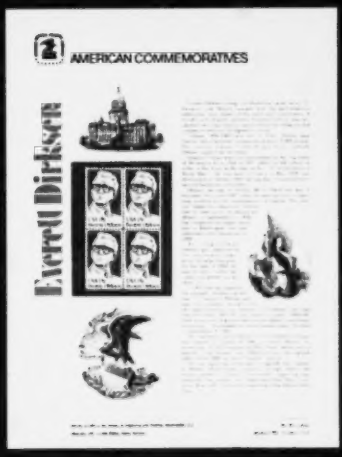
AMERICAN COMMEMORATIVE PANEL SERIES

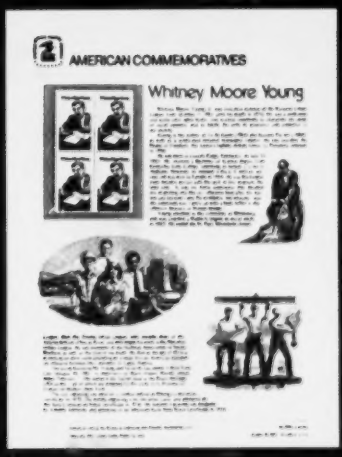
The next time you come across a special occasion, why not mark it with an exceptional gift from the U.S. Postal Service?

Since 1972, we've annually offered limited edition Commemorative Panels to honor each new commemorative issue for that year, including specials like Christmas stamps. The Wildlife Commemorative Panel was the first issue, and the enthusiasm it received set a pace for all those that have followed.

When you select your first Commemorative Panel, we think you'll understand that enthusiasm. Each consists of a beautifully designed, 8½ × 11¼" page that features four or more newly-issued commemorative stamps in mint condition. Handsome intaglio-printed reproductions of fine, steel line engravings (many over a century old) complement the stamps, and thoughtful stories accompany each commemorative subject. The result is a fascinating display that quickly gets even the casual participant totally involved.

Commemorative Panels combine the finest examples of stamp art with quality reproductions of the engraver's craft. As gifts, awards or just a gesture to a friend or relative, they're simply wonderful. And they're collector's items in themselves. Why not share one with someone? Or, if you already have, treat yourself! Cost is $4 per panel plus 50¢ postage and handling fee. Yearly subscriptions are available at $64 (which includes each panel issued throughout the year).



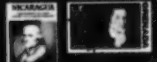


STAMP COLLECTING KITS

U.S. Postal Service Stamp Collecting Kits are an easy, fun introduction to the fascinating world of stamps. Besides getting you over the hurdle of "where to start," USPS Kits are one of the best values available to the beginning collector. And they're a perfect way to expand into a topical collection.

Your local post office may have additional Collecting Kits beyond those featured here. Since availability may vary, you may wish to check more than one post office. **The American Revolution Kit,** introduced during 1980, contains a vivid selection of stamps (both U.S. and foreign) depicting one of the most famous struggles in history. Watch for kits of new topics coming to your local post office in early 1982.

Every USPS Collecting Kit contains four basic collecting tools: a 20-page, color-illustrated album with background information and display space for each stamp; a selection of genuine, colorful stamps ready for mounting; a convenient packet of mounting hinges; and The Introduction to Stamp Collecting, a 24-page booklet containing all the guidelines you need to start your own collection.

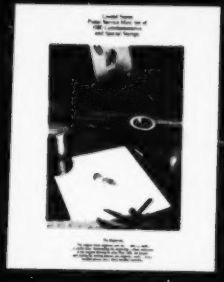


COMMEMORATIVE MINT SETS

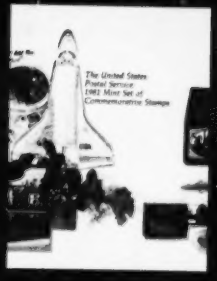
For the beginning and experienced collector alike, Commemorative Mint Sets are a fascinating and convenient way to capture the spirit and history of this country. Each year the U.S. Postal Service issues a new Commemorative Mint Set that includes all the commemorative stamps and Christmas stamps issued for that year, along with a handy album for displaying them. Inside each colorfully illustrated album is a display area supplied with acetate strips to keep your stamps mint fresh. There's also an interesting background story for each stamp and its subject.

Commemorative Mint Sets are a good way to start a commemorative collection. Or, if you've missed certain issues when they were available through your post office, you can fill the gaps in your collection with a Mint Set.

1979



1980



1981

The **1981 Mint Set** contains 20 issues with a total of 40 individual stamps. In addition to two colorful Christmas stamps which feature both contemporary and traditional designs, this year's set includes the spectacular Space Achievement block of eight along with four stamp blocks of Flowers, Wildlife Habitats, American Architecture, and Desert Plants. $8.95

The **1980 Mint Set** of Commemorative and Special Stamps contains sixteen commemoratives. In addition to colorful four-stamp blocks of Dwight D. Eisenhower, American Architecture, Benjamin Franklin, Veterans, and Winter Olympics, the set includes two Christmas stamps in both contemporary and traditional designs. $5.00

The **1979 Mint Set** contains a total of twenty-nine commemoratives, including the exciting 1980 Olympics Set, and four-stamp blocks of Hours of Enlightenment, Flora, Pennsylvania Toleware, and American Architecture. $6.25

1980 DEFINITIVE MINT SET

For the first time, the U.S. Postal Service® is offering a 1980 mint set of definitive stamps and postal stationery. Designed as a companion piece to the 1980 Commemorative Mint Set, it is similar in design and features an interesting narrative on each issue. The eight page booklet contains three insert pages, complete with plastic strips, for mounting the stamps and stationery items.

Issued in a limited edition of 400,000 (compared with the annual commemorative mint set production of 12 million), each Definitive Set contains one of each of the 20 regular stamps, five postal cards, four embossed envelopes and one aerogramme. Paired with the 1980 commemorative mint set, it will provide collectors with one of every postal item issued by the Postal Service in 1980.

Definitive Mint Sets may be purchased at more than 13,000 Stamp Collecting Centers or by mail order from the Postal Service's Philatelic Sales Division, Washington, DC 20265-9992. Retail price for the set is $6.50 plus 50¢ postage and handling when ordered from the Sales Division.

PHILATELIC CENTERS AND PRODUCTS

In addition to the 13,000 Stamp Collecting Centers at post offices, the U.S. Postal Service also maintains more than 300 Philatelic Centers located in major population centers throughout the country. Each of these Centers carries an extensive range of stamps, stationery and collateral materials issued by the Postal Service.

Philatelic Centers have been developed to serve the collector and make it convenient for you to acquire the U.S. Postal Service philatelic products you require. Please check locally for the nearest Philatelic Center in your area.

Philatelic Centers offer the postal materials shown on these pages, as well as a number of other collector-oriented products.

Space Achievement Folder. A colorful booklet featuring a mint block of Space Achievement commemorative stamps is available at post office Stamp Collecting Centers. Spectacular NASA photographs taken from outer space accompany lively text.

Stamp Collecting Kits. U.S. Postal Service Stamp Collecting Kits are a quick introduction to the world of stamps. Check with your local post office to see which kits are currently available.

Souvenir Cards. Souvenir Cards are issued to commemorate philatelic gatherings.

Mint Sets. Each year the Postal Service issues a new Commemorative Mint Set. During 1981 the Postal Service also offered a Special Mint Set Folder containing all 1980 definitive stamps and postal stationery. Stop in at your local post office or Philatelic Center to secure these sets.

Women's Mint Set. The Women's Mint Set honors 34 extraordinary women who have been recognized over the years on U.S. postage stamps. Sets can be purchased at your post office, Stamp Collecting Center or at Philatelic Centers.

ORDERING THROUGH THE PHILATELIC SALES DIVISION

This order form will assist customers unable to obtain desired philatelic products through their local post office. It's easy to order any of the listed products by filling in and mailing the coupon below. A description of each item can be found on the pages referenced.

The total remittance for your order will be accepted only in the form of a check, Postal money order, or bank draft and should be made payable to the PHILATELIC SALES DIVISION. Please note there is a minimum order of $5.00 not including postage and handling charge of $.50. Forward to the Philatelic Sales Division, U.S. Postal Service, Washington, DC 20265-9994.

☐ Mr.
☐ Mrs.
☐ Ms.

First Initial | Mid. Initial | Last Name

Street | Apt. No.

City | State | ZIP Code

ORDER FORM

ITEM	ITEM NO.	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL	REFERENCE
American Rev. Collecting Kit	0931		$2.50		p. 23
1979 Commemorative Mint Set (30 Stamps)	0939		$5.25		p. 24
1980 Commemorative Mint Set (28 stamps)	0947		$5.00		p. 24
1981 Commemorative Mint Set (40 stamps)	0881		$8.25		p. 24
1980–81 Americana Mint Set. Hard cover 52 page mint set featuring stamps from Americana Series.	0834		$14.00		
Space Achievement Folder	0833		$2.00		p. 26
				+$.50	
			GRAND TOTAL		

IMPORTANT DATES IN UNITED STATES POSTAL HISTORY

1639 Ordinance of the general court of Massachusetts designates Richard Fairbanks Tavern as official repository for mail.

1737 – 1753 Benjamin Franklin serves as Postmaster of Philadelphia, PA.

1775 Benjamin Franklin is appointed first Postmaster General by Continental Congress.

1787 The U.S. Constitution authorizes Congress to "establish Post Office."

1789 Congress establishes Post Offices and Office of the Postmaster General; Samuel Osgood appointed first Postmaster under U.S. Constitution.

1842 Postage stamps are introduced in the United States by a private firm, Greig's City Despatch Post of New York.

1845 Some United States Postmasters begin to provide special stamps of local origin to show prepayment of mail. These stamps are called Postmaster's Provisionals and are usually very rare.

1847 The U.S. government issues its first postage stamps (Scott's Nos. 1 and 2).

1855 Prepayment of postage is made compulsory.

1855 Registry service is inaugurated.

1860 – 1861 The Pony Express, a privately operated line which carries letters and special news slips, offers a six-day schedule between San Francisco and St. Joseph, Missouri.

1873 Postal cards first introduced.

1876 The introduction of the first practical canceling machines marks the beginning of a Postal mechanization program that has increased with intensity each year.

1885 Special Delivery service is inaugurated.

1918 Air Mail service is begun. By 1924 the United States has 24-hour trans-continental Air Mail service.

1920 On November 15, the metered mail system is approved and inaugurated.

1969 On July 20, the first postage stamp is cancelled on the moon by Apollo 11 Astronaut Neil Armstrong.

1971 The United States Postal Service is established on the moon by Apollo 15 Astronauts David Scott and James Irwin.

1971 The United States Postal Service, an independent establishment of the Executive Branch of the Government, assumes operation of the United States Post Office Department.

1974 Highway Post Offices are terminated.

1975 America's Postal Service celebrates its 200th anniversary.

1977 Airmail is abolished as a separate rate category.

1977 The Railway Mail service, established in 1864, makes its final run June 30.

1978 Postage stamps and other philatelic items are copyrighted by the U.S. Postal Service.

1978 The U.S. Postal Service awards a contract to a private printing firm for the printing of four commemorative stamps for issuance during 1979 and 1980. These stamps are: John Paul Jones; Benjamin Banneker; Veterans Administration; American Education.

MAJOR U.S. PHILATELIC SOCIETIES AND PUBLICATIONS

Philatelic Societies

American Air Mail Society
102 Arbor Rd.
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077

American First Day Cover Society
Mrs. Monte Eiserman
Membership Chairman
14359 Chadbourne
Houston, TX 77079

American Philatelic Society
Box 800
State College, PA 16801
A full complement of services and resources for the philatelist. Membership offers: American Philatelic Research Library; expertizing service; estate advisory service; translation services; a stamp theft committee which functions as a clearing house for stamp theft information; and a speakers' bureau.

American Stamp Dealer's Association
840 Willis Ave.
Albertson, NY 11507

American Topical Association
3308-W North 50th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53216
Concentrates on the specialty of topical collecting. Offers handbooks on specific topics; an exhibition award; a slide and film loan service; information and translation services; and an heirs' and estate service.

Bureau Issues Association
19 Maple Street
Arlington, MA 02174

Collectors Club, Inc.
22 East 35th Street
New York, NY 10016
Regular services include library and reading rooms, a publication and lectures on philatelic subjects. The group also honors a great American collector annually and actively supports national and international exhibitions.

Council of Philatelic Organizations
2918 Michele Dr.
Norristown, PA 19403
An organization comprised of 175 member philatelic groups. Objectives include: to educate the general public to the many benefits and pleasures of collecting stamps.

Junior Philatelists of America
Box 195
Minetto, NY 13115
Provides an auction department, library service, tape and slide service, stamp identification and translation services.

National Association of Precancel Collectors
5121 Park Blvd.
Wildwood, NJ 08260

The Perfins Club
10550 Western Ave.
Stanton, CA 90680

Philatelic Foundation
270 Madison Ave.
New York, NY 10016
Known for their expertization service, the Foundation also maintains an Expert Committee and publishes educational information.

Plate Block Collector Club
Box 937
Homestead, FL 33030

Plate Number Society
9600 Colesville Rd.
Silver Springs, MD 20901

Postal History Society
Box 20
Bayside, NY 11361

Post Mark Collectors Club
Bernice White
3487 Firstenberger Rd.
Marion, OH 43302

Society of Philatelic Americans
Box 9041
Wilmington, DE 19809
Monthly journal, sales circuits, exchange department, expertization and insurance.

United Postal Stationery Society
Mrs. J. Thomas
Box 48
Redlands, CA 92373

The United States Possessions Philatelic Society
141 Lyford Drive
Tiburon, CA 94920

The Universal Ship Cancellation Society
P.O. Box 13
New Britain, CT 06050

Catalogues

Brookman Price List of U.S. Stamps
Minneapolis, MN

Catalogue of United States Souvenir Cards
The Washington Press
Florham Park, NJ 07932

First Day Cover Catalogue (U.S.-U.N.)
Washington Press
Florham Park, NJ 07932

Souvenir Pages Price List
Charles D. Simmons
P.O. Box 6238
Buena Park, CA 90622

Commemorative Panel Price List
Frank Riolo
P.O. Box 1540
Delray Beach, FL 33444

Fleetwoods Standard First Day Cover Catalog
Unicover Corporation
Cheyenne, WY 82001

Harris Illustrated Postage Stamp Catalog
Boston, MA 02117

Minkus New World Wide Stamp Catalogue
NY

American Air Mail Catalogue
American Air Mail Society
Cinnaminson, NJ 08077

Scott Standard Postage Stamp Catalogue
NY

Magazines and Newspapers

Canadian Stamp News
1567 Sedlescomb Drive
Mississauga, Ont. L4X1M5

Linn's Stamp News
Box 29
Sidney, OH 45367

Mekeel's Weekly Stamp News
Box 1660
Portland, ME 04104

Minkus Stamp Journal
116 West 32nd Street
New York, NY 10001

Scott's Monthly Stamp Journal
3 East 57th St.
New York, NY 10022

Stamps
153 Waverly Place
New York, NY 10014

Stamp Collector
Box 10
Albany, OR 97321

Stamp Show News & Philatelic Review
1839 Palmer Ave.
Larchmont, NY 10538

Stamp World
Box 29
Sidney, OH 45367
Monthly publication directed to informational and feature articles on stamp subjects, stamp designs and other general topics.

Philatelic Literature

Brookman, Lester G. *The 19th Century Postage Stamps of the United States* (3 volumes). NY, 1968.

Chase, Carroll C. *The 3¢ Stamps of the United States, 1942.*

Johl, Max G. *The United States Commemorative Stamps of the Twentieth Century, 1947.*

Linn's World Stamp Almanac, Sidney, OH, 1978.

Mueller, Barbara R. *United States Postage Stamps, 1958.*

Patrick, Douglas and Mary. *The Musson Stamp Dictionary, 1972.*

D.G. Phillips Publ. Co. *The American Stampless Cover Catalog, 1978.*

Scheele, Carl H. *A Short History of the Mail Service, 1970.*

Scott's New Handbook for Philatelists. NY, 1967.

Thorp, Prescott H. *Stamped Envelopes and Wrappers of the United States.* Netcong, NJ, 1954.

United Postal Stationery Society. *United States Postal Card Catalog.* Albany, OR, 1975.

United States Postal Service *United States Postage Stamp, Pub. 9.* Washinton, DC, 1970 as revised.
A compendium of philatelic information on U.S. stamps. Updated periodically. Available through the Government Printing Office.

Each of the 50 State Bird and Flower stamps is a masterpiece in miniature.

Arthur and Alan Singer are the first known father and son team to design a stamp issue for the United States Postal Service.

It was an extremely difficult assignment. No one had ever done 50 such different stamp designs on a single pane before. (The nearest would be the 50 State Flag stamps issued in 1976.)

There were problems. Arthur Singer wanted each stamp to be different from every other one on the pane. And several states had duplications. For example, seven states have the cardinal as the state bird.

Arthur Singer, however, knows birds and understands the patterns of their feathers. In the 1960s, he did the "Birds of the World" book, and his "Guide to the Birds of North America" is the only bird guide book of its kind in the country because it includes birds of both the east and the west.

"There are many illustrators who are only concerned about portraying birds—or other animals—accurately. While this is, of course, very important, I try to make my work artistically good as well as accurate," Singer emphasized.

Singer does have the power to portray birds and other animals beautifully as well as accurately, and this is why each of the 50 state birds seems to come alive on the pane of stamps.

When working on the stamp designs, Singer would begin early in the morning in his Jericho, New York, home studio, and work late into the night.

Most of the time, Arthur and his son, Alan, worked together, father on one board, son on the other. Singer would place the bird on a board first, indicating approximately where he wanted the flower to go. Then Alan would take the board for the flower design. It worked out well, according to Singer. While each knew what he wanted to see, there were no conflicts.

Both father and son would first sketch the drawings roughly and then in greater detail, sometimes doing them in pastels for color. After they were satisfied with the sketches, they would transfer the drawings to the board in paint. The paintings were four by eight inches, which is five to seven times the size of a stamp.

Singer said he welcomed the opportunity to do these stamps for the United States, and is eager to see them on the mail soon. (The issue date is April 14.) "I did not want them to be too fussy," he said, "but I did want them to be more than just a 'bird on a stick.' I had fun doing them."

While the work was not physically difficult, it took a great deal of intensity and endurance to create the fine details, graceful lines and brilliant colors that would reproduce well in stamp size and survive the required printing procedures for the production of several hundred million postage stamps.